

Basic Detail Report



86.089.002

Medium

Wood, buttons, fiber, metal, and cloth

Description

Wood marionette with articulated arms, long plaited coiffure, button eyes, fibre and metal, and costume. Object has a base. Miniature rod puppets represent a great range of characters from musicians and horsemen, to working women and fishermen. The long, straight nose, elaborate coiffure, colorful yarn jewelry, and exposed taut breasts of this puppet identify her as the Beautiful Woman (Yayoroba). Known characters such as the Beautiful Woman (Yayoroba) may perform in different puppet dramas. The dramas bring to life many concerns. They can focus on interpersonal relationships, polygamous marriage, or traditional hunting tales. Audiences praise creativity and innovation in the dramas. Performers respond to this encouragement with stories about divorce or contemporary politics and invent new characters such as the Anthropologist who smokes and takes notes. Sogo

bò, the puppet masquerade drama, are assembled and performed by the village youth association. These associations, or ton, include young men between the ages of fourteen and their early thirties, and women from age fourteen until they are married. Women assist in the performance, but the puppeteers are always men. This miniature rod puppet would have been manipulated along with other puppets atop a large animal puppet's back.. (See 81.086.003) The fabric covering which forms the animal's back conceals 2-3 puppeteers and provides a stage for the puppet performance. The Bamana, an ethnolinguistic group of the upper Niger region of Mali, cannot be easily distinguished from their neighbors such as the Mande or Fula who have adopted Bamana language and culture. Formerly called "Bambara," a pejorative name assigned to Bamana people by outside informants, the Bamana distinguish themselves from their neighbors in religious terms. Bamana people observe the religious practices of their ancestors; they have not converted to Islam. Suggested reading: Mary Jo Arnoldi, *Playing with Time: Art and Performance in Central Mali*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995.

Dimensions

27 x 7 1/2 inches (68.6 x 19.1 cm)